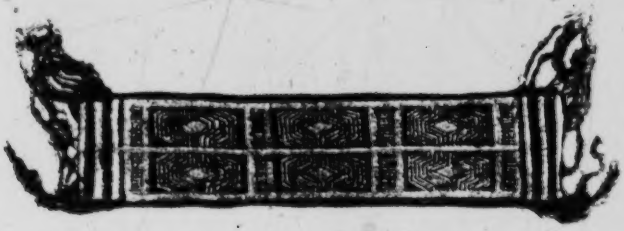
1: Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

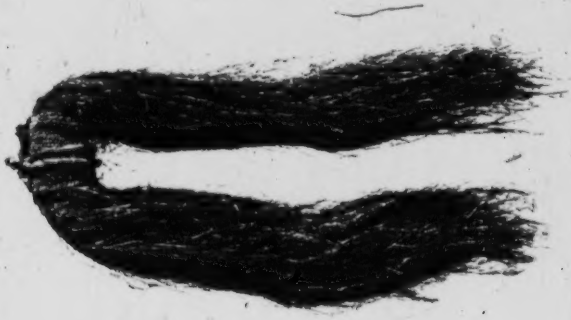
PLATE VI

535



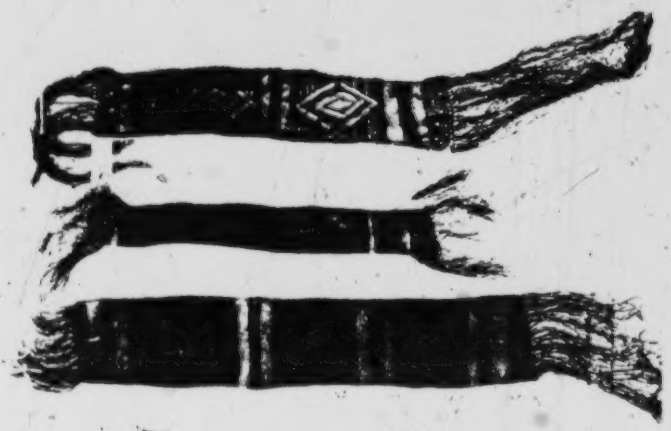
3. Dancing-mat obtained from Oba (see p. 523). (*Speiser*, 3, *Plate* 74, *Fig.* 4)

436



2. Money-mat (*mangau*). (*Speiser*, 3, *Plate* 75, *Fig.* 6)

291



1. Phaled penis-wrappers from East Malekula and Raga. (*Speiser*, 3, *Plate* 43, *Figs.* 11, 12, 13)

[facing p. 43]

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

to the fact that they acquired many of the chief Maki rites from the mainland of Malekula before these were acquired on Vao, they hold, despite their small numbers, a very special position on the island. Their history is recorded in Chapter XXII.

(*b*) The two former communities of Lavame, which has only three surviving members, also now living at Togh-vanu, and Handillagh, which is extinct. Lavame formerly possessed two dancing-grounds. The now deserted dancing-ground marked in Map III as being on the path leading from Le-siwar to Togh-vanu is probably one of these. The inhabitants formerly had close kinship ties with the mainland village of Le-huru. A tale dealing with the quarrel between Lavame and Handillagh is given on p. 80.

(*c*) The refugee community of Le-se-kere, of which only one man survives.

None of these, however, affect the essential organisation of the island, and they may therefore be left out of account here, with the passing remark that the confusion in the stories regarding the origin of the various Vao villages cited in the next chapter may well have arisen partly through a number of refugee communities attaching themselves to existing villages and so giving rise to contradictory legends.

I will confine myself in this chapter to a description of the overt social organisation, so far as I recorded it, of the six villages into which the native Vao population is divided.

Dancing-grounds.

Every Vao village possesses one dancing-ground,[1] called *ne-sar*,[2] which is the focal point of the village, the place where the stone-platforms, dolmens and monoliths, and gongs connected with the Maki, are set up, and the scene of the chief Maki rites. Though in the centre of the village and not guarded by any physical barrier, no woman may set foot on the soil of a dancing-ground except during certain dances and rites connected

[1] There are exceptional cases in which one village has two dancing-grounds (see pp. 61, 89).

[2] Sometimes referred to as *le-sar*, using the locative particle *le-* in place of the indefinite article *ne-*. The use of this word for dancing-ground, shared also by the adjacent Malekulan coastal villages, is, so far as I know, unique in the Malekulan area in which, as also on the remaining Small Islands and in Ambrim, the usual term used for it is some form of the word (*h*)*amal*, which in its turn is related to *ghamal* (see footnote p. 60). The root *sar* is, however, used in this sense also in South-East Oba, where in the district of Lologharo the word for dancing-ground is *sare*, in Losigwei *na-sar*, and in Lol-mangwe *sara* (Layard, 9). In South Raga it is *sar* (Tattevin, 1, 1926, p. 377). In Vanua Lava "a man may plant a cycas in his garden as a sign that it is *sare tamate*, i.e. the lodge or resting-place of a *tamate*" (Rivers, 1, vol. I, p. 89). Dr. Capell suggests that the word is probably derived from the Indonesian *saghep*, "to sweep." Compare Mota *sara*, meaning both "court," "open space," and "to sweep"; *sarag*, "to wipe away"; *sarav*, "to rub," etc. By extension, *sara* also means "to gather, bring together," and *sargag* "to assemble" (Codrington, 2).

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
OO12 Malekula OO12

with the presentation of tusked boars. Here, men rule supreme, and here the main sacrifices to the ancestors take place. This is the spot from which each village is said to spring, and in all native accounts of the foundation of any village the construction of the dancing-ground is the founder's first act.

Ghamal.

Close to the dancing-ground is the largest building in the village, called *ghamal*.[1] This is the roofed counterpart of the dancing-ground, being the centre for all such business connected with the Maki as needs protection from the weather. This also is sacred to men, no woman being allowed, save on certain specified occasions, to set foot across the fence surrounding it. The word *ghamal* is clearly connected with the Banks Islands *gamal*, and the intimate association of this structure with the dancing-ground is seen in the use of the word itself, since in Atchin the corresponding word *amal* is actually used for the dancing-ground, while the Initiation Lodge, which in Atchin occupies the same position with regard to the dancing-ground as does the *ghamal* on Vao, is called *lol-hamal*, meaning "in the midst of the (*h*)*amal*." Variations of this same word are applied throughout Malekula and Ambrim alternatively for the dancing-ground or for the structure connected with it.[2] It is probably the same word as *Mal*, the title taken by the chief sacrificer in the Maki rites throughout this area. This title is connected with the verb *pal*, "to

[1] Usually combined with the indefinite article as *na-ghamal*.

[2] Instances of the use of this term for MEN'S-HOUSE or LODGE are:
Banks Islands, *gamal* (Codrington, Rivers).
Torres Islands, *gamel* (Rivers, 1, vol. I, p. 185).
Oba, *gamali* (Rivers, 1, vol. II, p. 232).
Santo (St. Philip's and St. James' Bay), *gamali* (ibid.).
" (Nogugu), *na-gamal*, *na-gamali* (Deacon, 3, p. 473).
" (" and Epi), *komal*, *komali*, *komel* (Rivers, 1, vol. II, p. 233).
South Raga (Pornowol), *mal* (Tattevin, 1, 1927, p. 427).
Ambrim (Sulol), *himel* (Rivers, 3), *imel* (Deacon, 3, p. 518).
Malekula (Seniang), *na-amel* (Deacon, 4, glossary).
" (Lambumbu), (*g*)*amal* (ibid.).
" (Lagalag), *hamal* (ibid.).
" (Big Nambas), *ghamal* (ibid.).
" (Port Sandwich), *amil* (Rivers, 1, vol. II, p. 233).
" (Aulua), *n'amal*, *n'amel* (ibid.).
West Epi (Burumba), *gomali* (Deacon, 3, p. 504).

Instances of the use of the term for DANCING-GROUND all come from Malekula and Ambrim, and are:
Malekula (Atchin), *amal* (where *lol-hamal* means "Initiation Lodge") (Layard, 9).
" (Wala), *n'amil* (ibid.).
" (Lambumbu), *na-amel* (Deacon, 4, glossary).
" (Lagalag), *hamil* (= "sacred place of clan") (ibid.).
Ambrim (Sulol), *hemel* (where *himel* means Men's-House) (Rivers, 3).

In the Small Islands of Malekula, other than Vao, this meaning has become extended yet further, in that many VILLAGES themselves are called *emil*, with a qualifying adjective, e.g. on Atchin, *Emil Parav* (long), *Emil Marur* (narrow), *Emil Lap* (great).

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

sacrifice" or "to be sacrificed,"[1] and the sanction for the structure's sacredness is the human sacrifice which, together with the sacrifice of tusked boars, forms an essential feature of the consecration rite performed when it is built.[2]

It would appear, therefore, that the word *ghamal*, or *amal*, as used either for the dancing-ground or for the roofed structure associated with it, should properly be rendered "Place of Sacrifice."

The numerous functions of the *ghamal* will appear during the course of this work. It will suffice here to mention some of the most important. We have already noted its sacredness to men, that is to say to those who have performed the Maki rite, and have thus during their lifetime taken on some of the holiness of ancestors. Each man has his own place,[3] marked by his sleeping-mat (*tambaghar*) and by his earth-oven, at which either he or his sons cook his meals. Here all those who have performed the chief Maki sacrifice must sleep during the thirty-day period following the rite, eating of food specially cooked by their wives, though the most elaborate precautions are taken that this food shall not come into contact with that eaten by women.[4] Warriors also sleep in the *ghamal* before intended battle. Here also are made the masks and other perishable objects used in the special dances called *na-leng*,[5] and new gongs are hollowed out, accompanied by magic formulae. The most important feasts connected with the Maki are held here, and all decisions come to with regard to Maki rites. Here also debates are held at night, or when it rains, and young men are instructed by their elders in the history of the tribe.

End-to-end dancing-grounds.

It has been said above that each village has but one dancing-ground. This statement is true of all Vao villages with the exception of Peter-ihi, which has two dancing-grounds placed end to end. While in all other cases the dancing-ground goes by the same name as the village, the two dancing-grounds of Peter-ihi are called by different names, respectively *Etine* and *Norolu*. A similar arrangement is found in the Atchin village of Olep, where, however, one is called by the same name as the village, *Olep*, and the other *N'amal Para*, or "New Dancing-ground," of which Olep is the socially superior, and the "New Dancing-ground" the inferior.

This curious arrangement is explained by the natives to be due to historical reasons such as that accounting for the foundation of the double-

[1] Cf. the Indonesian *pamali*, *pemali*, *pomali*, meaning "sacred or taboo," used especially in connexion with the tabular sacrificial stone called *batu pomali* (similar to the sacrificial dolmen erected during the Vao Maki), closely connected with the Kakihan Society of West Ceram, which Deacon takes to be the prototype of Melanesian secret societies (Deacon, 1, p. 340).

[2] This rite, a special form of Maki, is fully described in Chapter XVI, where a detailed description of the building is also given.

[3] *Melelaku*, "l'endroit où je couche" (Godefroy, 1, 1933, p. 36).

[4] See p. 400.

[5] See p. 337.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

village of Pete-hul–Togh-vanu on Vao. According to this account, fully related below,[1] there was in the beginning only one village, Pete-hul, which was founded by two brothers, each of whom constructed his own dancing-ground, both being placed end to end as in the modern village of Peter-ihi. Later, owing to changes in the kinship system which will be fully discussed in Chapter VI, some of the descendants of the younger brother split off from the parent community to found the offshoot village of Togh-vanu by the construction of a separate dancing-ground some little distance away. I mention this here as a possible explanation of the existing two dancing-grounds end-to-end at Peter-ihi, the reason for which I omitted to enquire into on the spot.[2]

"*Sides of the Stone.*"

We have already noted (1) the division of the island into two moieties, and (2) that of each double-village into two twin-villages.

The next sub-division to be recorded is that of the population of each village into two yet further patrilineal moieties called *tosan na-vatu*. We have already met with the word *tosan* used by itself as referring to the two unnamed "Sides of the Island." Here also the word *tosan* means "side," and, combined with the word *na-vatu*, "stone," means "Side of the Stone." As in the case of the two "Sides of the Island," these two moieties are unnamed, members of each moiety referring to members of the other simply as *tosan na-vatu*, "Side (i.e. the other Side) of the Stone."[3]

Organisation of the Double-Village of Pete-hul–Togh-vanu on the Superior Side of the Island

Pete-hul founded by Ta-ghar.

What has been said above applies to every village on the island. With regard to the further dual divisions into which society is organised, we are faced with the fact of new disturbing influences from Atchin which have to some extent upset the old order.

[1] See p. 89.

[2] The situation in regard to Peter-ihi is, however, complicated by the fact that this village is already provided with an offshoot village, Venu. It would appear that the same process which caused the formation of the original offshoot village is again in operation, and that the parent village is once more in process of dividing into two.

[3] Natives of Vao automatically know to which Side of the Stone this phrase refers, since it must be that Side of the Stone in the speaker's own village to which he himself does not belong. When speaking to strangers, or of the Sides of the Stone in another village, distinction between the two Sides is made by referring specifically to the two Quarters (see p. 70 and Fig. 5) of which each Side is composed. Thus, in the case of Pete-hul, specific reference can only be made by speaking of one Side of the Stone as "*tosan na-vatu La-mbot-na-ninge, Nalu*," these being the names of the two Quarters composing one Side (see below), and of the other as "*tosan na-vatu La-mbet-ra, La-mbarang*."

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

at whatever time it is our habit to rise, and therefore refer to the whole period, including the night, as a "day." The native, having no clocks, perforce judges the passage of the diurnal period by means of striking natural phenomena. Unlike ourselves, however, he tends to regard the night as a preparation for the day. This is particularly evident on the major ritual occasions, which are always preceded by an all-night dance beginning at sunset. Moreover, he is not usually an early riser. He therefore chooses sunset as the beginning of things, and consequently calls the twenty-four-hour cycle embracing both night and day a "night." The Vao word for this is *bong*, which also means "darkness" and is used as an adjective meaning "black" and as a name for black paint.

Variants of the same word are used with the same meaning throughout Malekula, and are used also in a special sense to mean "*the* day (or night)" on which any particular rite is to take place or has taken place. The word thus covers a multitude of meanings. We have no such word, and can only translate this use of it by such expressions as "date," "feast-day," "day (or night) on which a given rite is performed." Any occasion of ritual importance is called a *bong*, but there is a yet more particular meaning which confines the use of the word as an official designation to those important dates which do not precede but follow the high spots of native ritual. Thus, in any of the ritual cycles the dates of important events leading up to the culminating rite depend largely on the state of preparedness of the interested parties, whether they have ready a sufficient number of pigs, yams, and so on, and, though they may be referred to in ordinary speech as *bong*, each has its own particular name. Once the culminating event is over, however, the dates for the subsequent rites are for the most part strictly and immutably fixed, and these dates are themselves the names by which the rites are officially known. Thus we get dates such as *bong e-lim*, "the Fifth Day" (after the culminating rite), *bong movul ghe-tol*, "the Thirtieth Day," etc.[1]

This method of reckoning by nights rather than days leads to certain difficulties in the recording of native rites. In the first place, it involves translating the word *bong*, properly used for "night," in this kind of context by the English word "day."

A second, more serious, source of possible error in transcribing the course of events which the recorder has not personally seen arises from the practice of preceding important rites by the performance of an all-night dance, a practice which itself may be partly responsible for the choice of the word "night" to designate the whole twenty-four-hour period. Thus, an informant, having given an account of daylight

[1] In the ritual accompanying childbirth they date from the moment of birth. In Initiation they date from the sacrifice of incision, and in the Maki and its cognate rites from the culminating sacrifice which is at the same time the moment of re-birth. In the case of mortuary rites they date from the day of burial.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

796X
554

position of chief instructor in the rites, not only for his son, but also for the whole "line" of new Maki-men to which his son belongs.

This man is "leading man" of the rite, called Singon a war-warean.

This man who is "making the Maki" thus occupies a very special position in the rites. He is what we should speak of as the master of ceremonies, and it is on him that the success of the rite largely depends. It is his function not only to instruct, but also to decide whether a sufficient number of pigs and yams are available for each new step in the rite to be taken, and in general to expedite the whole performance. He is the "leading man" of the rite, and, owing to yet another function he performs, namely that of speech-maker and announcer of the date on which each new step is to take place,[1] he is known by a special name, *singon e war-warean*, literally "speaking lip." This name is pregnant with meaning, since *singon* ("lip") also means promontory, alluding to his prominent position, and the root *war* is also used in a number of variants for "to pray." As no English equivalent can render these nuances, I shall refer to this individual, who is at the same time the chief introducer, as the "leading man" of the rite.

Dancing by Villages in Rotation

796X
535

One of the chief functions of the leading man is, as we have seen, to announce the date for each sub-rite. Almost all such sub-rites are the occasion for dancing,[2] and on the most important of them the members of every Vao village, and even of villages on other islands, come to dance in established rotation on successive nights preceding the rite, ending up with a combined all-night dance on the Eve of the performance.

796X

The receiving of villages in rotation in this way is called *ar tame vanu*, of which *ar* is the first person plural personal pronoun, *vanu* means "village," here referring to its members, and *tame* means to "salute" or "welcome."[3]

By extension, the word *tame* also means "to give in return for something else," and is used primarily with regard to food.[4] Thus members of other villages also come on certain occasions and in the same rotation to assist in work needing large numbers of helpers, such as the hauling

[1] With certain exceptions, such as the date of the culminating sacrifice, in which case his place is taken by a man from another village (see p. 282).

[2] See Chapter XII.

[3] Thus, to *tame* an approaching canoe means to wait for it on the beach and greet the members of the crew when they land.

[4] Compare South-West Ambrim *tam-tar* Rivers, 3) meaning "distribution of food." The Vao word can, however, be used in other contexts. Thus, when I give my informant Ma-taru a present of tobacco in return for the time spent working for me, the current phrase would be *ne tame Ma-taru*, "I reward Ma-taru." The Atchin form of the word *tame* is *tamwe*. Compare Mota *tamwa*, meaning "as, like."

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

(*c*) The "sacrificial signal," sounded whenever a tusked boar is ritually sacrificed.[1] The sounding of this signal is called *asar*. The use of this word differs from that of the other two gong-signals already mentioned, in that the names for these two are used adjectively and are always preceded by the word *na-mbe*, meaning "gong" or "gong-signal," whereas *asar* is a verb of which the nominal form, *asaren*, is rarely used.

In addition to these oft-repeated signals, each song-and-dance cycle mentioned below has its own particular rhythms, known by the same name as the dance prefixed by the word *na-mbe*.

When to the already complicated rhythms of the gongs are added the further counter-rhythms of the dance-steps and of the accompanying songs, the effect is one of indescribable excitement, stirring emotions that the concerts of Europe never touch but that the natives can call forth at will through their unrivalled sense of rhythm.

Certain recurring dance-movements also have their own special rhythms, such as the serpentine running movement in single file referred to below on p. 323, for which the rhythm is called *ril-dralen*, philologically connected with the processional dance called *na-rel*.[2]

There are also special signals such as that called *tav-tav ghore* used on great sacrificial occasions when a special screen hiding the tusked boars is torn down prior to the sacrificial act.[3]

In addition to these there are special rhythms for announcing a death, together with the rank of the dead man, or the birth of an eldest son, or for summoning the people in case of war. There is also a special gong-signal sounded to announce the arrival of a stranger. According to Godefroy,[4] if such a one arrives on the shore and asks to speak to someone on the island, he is straightway conducted to the dancing-ground of the clan to whom the man he is seeking belongs. If this man is away, the one who accompanied the stranger will sound this special signal on the gongs, together with other signals specifying the man he seeks.[5]

SONGS

Of the songs themselves, only the faintest indication is afforded in the few examples which I give in this book. For one reason, they are almost invariably sung in more than one part. These parts are, so far as I know, not definitely recognised as such, at least so far as the men's voices are concerned, notes being altered at will by individual singers while fitting in with the harmonic scheme and melody of the song. When sung in chorus during dancing, which is the most spectacular form of the art and

[1] But not when it is killed only for food, as is the case with gelded tuskers.
[2] See p. 318. [3] See pp. 389, 420, 429. [4] Godefroy, 1, 1934, p. 59.
[5] For accounts of gong-rhythms in Seniang, including examples in notation, see Deacon, 4, Chapter XVII.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

533 such song-and-dance cycles performed during the Maki and other rites, so that the number of these ritual songs alone mounts up to several hundred. In addition to these, there are special mortuary songs, songs connected with initiation, with gong-raising, lodge-building and all the numerous other major rites, as well as sea-songs and songs sung during the consecration of sea-going canoes. Then there are yet other songs sung by individuals, such as love-songs, incantations connected with magic and with the rearing of pigs, songs sung when manufacturing fish-traps, children's songs, and all the numerous ditties sung in connexion with tales of legendary heroes and fairy-tales dealing with the doings of birds, rats, eels, flying foxes and an endless number of other animate and inanimate objects. I calculated at one time that even the least musical of natives knew at least 1000 songs, or parts of them, and experts a great many more.

DANCES

535 We are here, however, concerned primarily with the Maki, and this leads us on to the last general feature to be gone into before entering on a detailed description of this rite, namely the dances.

I have already described the "circling" performed by the Maki-men and their sons-in-law and brothers-in-law during the presentation of tusked boars. This is one of the few dances performed by individuals. It is also one of the few dances (possibly the only one) unaccompanied by singing.

The majority of ritual dances are, on the contrary, performed by bodies of men, who at the same time sing and are usually, though not always, accompanied by gongs. With regard to these, as to the "circling," my most detailed notes were taken on Atchin, where I joined in the dances myself and made a close study of the various movements of which some of them are composed, together with the technical terms applied to them. These will be given in another volume. I did not make the same detailed investigation on Vao, and my account of the Vao dances will therefore be restricted to a few of their most salient features.

Terminology of villages dancing in rotation.

The ordinary Vao verb for "to dance" is *sel*, of which the nominal form is *veluan*, "dancing." As already stated, the performance of each major rite is heralded for weeks ahead by the men of each Vao village in turn coming in prescribed order to the home-village to dance at intervals of two or more days between each. Each party that comes is welcomed by the Maki-men, and the whole process is therefore called *ar tame vanu*, "they welcome [1] the villages," to which is added the name of the dance they are about to perform. Thus, where the dance about to be performed is that called *Velal* (see below), the phrase used is *ar tame*

[1] See p. 299.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

vanu velal, "they welcome the villages (that come to dance) *Velal*." The first party to dance, namely the introducing "line" of the home-village, is said to *vel dromghe*, "dance first." The process of dancing in rotation is called *havean*, and the last and final performance, when the introducing "line" again dance and are joined this time by parties from all villages at once in what is usually an all-night dance, is called *havean e him*, "the turn of the home-village (*him*)."

Dances fall into three groups.

The dances themselves may be divided for purposes of description into three groups:

(1) Processional dances, danced from one end of the dancing-ground to the other, or, on occasion, along the roads leading to the dancing-ground, or even, in matters connected with the sea, on the beach.

(2) Circular dances, danced radially round a central post. These are performed only on the dancing-ground.

(3) Figure-dances called *na-leng*.

Processional and circular dances associated with two types of dancing-ground.

The figure-dances fall into a distinct category by themselves, and I will deal with them later. The other two groups, the processional and the circular, are probably to a large extent conditioned by the types of dancing-ground on which they were originally danced. This fact will probably assist us to some extent in disentangling the various elements that go to build up the ritual of the Maki, by showing their connexion with different areas in which the graded society is found. For there are, in fact, two types of dancing-ground in Malekula. These are:

(*a*) A long narrow type, such as is found in Vao, Atchin and Wala. There is some reason for supposing that this type of dancing-ground was simply developed out of the widening of the men's path as it leads through the village. In this type the gongs are placed at one side, namely the Upper or men's Side, where they occupy somewhat incongruously a middle position among the stones and images set up for the Maki.

(*b*) A circular type, with the gongs in the centre. This type of dancing-ground is that found all over the south and centre of Malekula as far north as Lagalag (we have no information regarding the Big Nambas) and in the Small Islands as far north as Uripiv.

Upright slit gongs originally associated with circular dancing-grounds.

Taking into consideration the fact that the upright slit gongs are much more realistically carved in the south, where the gong-rhythms are also more highly developed, and their position of honour in the centre

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

535 of the dancing-ground, it is probable that it is with this type of circular
534 dancing-ground that they were originally associated. Thus the Small Islands appear to have derived the upright slit gong from Malekula, but this influence was not strong enough to alter the whole shape of the dancing-ground, which retains the long narrow form presumably associated with the pre-Maki form of public graded society in which the large dolmen was the only monument erected.

Thus the gongs come to occupy the somewhat anomalous position they now hold in the middle of the Upper Side. This leaves the floor of the dancing-ground without a central point round which the introduced circular dances can be performed. This lack is made good in Atchin by the provision of sacrificial posts erected permanently in the middle of the ground and serving, in the rites leading up to the main Maki sacrifice, to support huge banners representing hawks. In Vao such posts, used for the same purpose, are also erected at the same period in the ritual cycle, but are not left permanently there. When erected, they serve as a focus for the circular dances, and on certain other occasions an erythrina tree (*ŋa-rar*) planted in the centre of the dancing-ground fulfils the same function.[1]

PROCESSIONAL DANCES

535 The distinction drawn above between processional and circular dances and their primary association with different types of dancing-ground applies chiefly to those connected with the Maki. These are all danced out of doors, in the dancing-ground or along the paths leading to it, or on the beach. There is, however, another type of more intimate processional dance performed within a more confined space, as, for instance, those danced during the mortuary rites backwards and forwards in front of the Lodge, or, in the case of initiation, within the Initiation House itself. Some of these, again, may be performed sometimes in the dancing-ground and sometimes indoors. It is thus not easy to draw a clear line of demarcation between the two. The essence of them all, however, is that they progress from one spot to another, even though the same ground may be covered over and over again, and for this reason I propose to class them all under the heading of Processional (as opposed to Circular) Dances.

Na-rel

The most important, and at the same time the simplest, processional dance is that called *Na-rel*, derived from a root meaning "to walk," variations of which, such as *rel*, *ral*, *rali*, mean "walk about," "run," "run about," etc. In this case it is used to indicate a heavy thudding step, each foot lifted from the ground before the other is brought down

[1] See p. 420.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
OO12 Malekula OO12

535

with the whole weight of the body on heel and sole, which is the characteristic movement of the dance. The combined thud of perhaps thirty feet together makes an impressive sound, mingled with the songs, the deep booming of the upright gongs and the quick rattle of the horizontal gonglets. Even on occasions when the gongs are absent, as when the dance takes place on the shore, it is a noble sight to see the body of dancers thus slowly advancing to the sound of their own singing.

The chief occasion on which *Na-rel* is danced is at the height of the culminating rites of the Maki, in broad daylight, when the guests arrive in this manner accompanying those about to "circle" for their presentation-pigs,[1] or when, at High Maki, the men of the introducing "line" bring up the tusked boars which are to be sacrificed at the stone-platform.[2] Songs belonging to this cycle are sung also by those paddling the great tree trunks which are to be made into gongs over the channel from the mainland, where they have been felled, to the Small Island; also while similarly transporting tree trunks that are to be manufactured into sea-going canoes.[3] The same dance takes place and the same songs are sung during Initiation into Manhood, while bringing the logs from which the Initiation House is to be built, and during its construction, after the operation of incision, and while accompanying the novices back from the shore where their wounds have been dressed.[4]

Le-tean

Not unlike the *Na-rel* in its simplicity is another song-and-dance cycle called *Le-tean*. The chief occasion on which this is performed is on the Thirtieth Day after the Maki sacrifice (for both High and Low Maki), and the songs are in honour of the individual Maki-men who have by now assumed their new titles and names.[5] It is performed also on the occasion of the premature death of a circle-tusker intended for sacrifice, when, rather than lose all the trouble and expense spent in rearing it, the animal is ritually "sacrificed" by being tapped on the head, and this premature "sacrifice" is admitted as valid on the day of the rite itself, the head having been preserved and being now placed on the stone-platform, when the would-be sacrificer re-enacts his part as though it were still alive.[6] The same song-and-dance is performed at the consecration of the sail of a new sea-going canoe,[7] and also during the building of the Initiation House, as well as inside it during the subsequent initiation rites.[8]

This song-and-dance cycle was said by one informant to correspond to the *Kulen* cycle on Atchin, songs of which will appear in a future volume.

[1] See p. 387.
[2] See p. 427.
[3] See p. 465.
[4] See pp. 505 ff.
[5] See Song 6, p. 404.
[6] See p. 435.
[7] See p. 468.
[8] See Song 7, p. 506.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
OO12 Malekula OO12

Tughunuan

Danced and sung also in the Initiation House is another cycle called *Tughunuan*, of which the songs approximate more closely to children's songs, being for the most part about birds or fruit. The singers are the novices' tutors and other initiates, who, while singing them, dance up and down the centre of the house. They are also sung in the intervals of the hoaxes practised upon the candidates, and the only example I recorded was one sung to lull the boys' suspicions and give them a false sense of security during the preparation of one of these gruesome ordeals.[1]

Tunen

Closely connected with *Le-tean* is another song-and-dance cycle called *Tunen*. This is performed at the consecration of the sail of a new sea-going canoe, when the dancers take up a somewhat precarious position on the canoe itself, immediately after it has been launched, and steady themselves by holding on to the newly erected rigging.[2] It also figures among the dances that may be performed during the fourteen days that elapse between the death of an old man and the launching, on the Fourteenth Day, of a canoe containing his effects, which is subsequently ritually captured by the men of his mother's village, who take it home and place it on a stone-platform built on their own beach.[3]

Nu-mbo Ta-ba (Songs of the Men of Oba)

Also connected with the sea are the songs primarily sung on the return voyage from Oba, after the rite of Initiation into Sex which young men undergo on the occasion of their first landing on this island when they accompany their elders who go there to trade in pigs. Oba is, as we have already seen, called, together with Maewo, the "Land of Ta-ghar," owing to the fact that this deity is said to have lived there. I have called this expedition the Pilgrimage to Oba,[4] and on its return are sung the special sea-songs called *Nu-mbo Ta-ba*,[5] which means "Songs of the men of Oba."

While singing these songs, the singers dance on the canoe-platforms, supporting themselves, as during the singing of *Tunen*, by holding on to the rigging. The dance is thus essentially a processional one, though the movement from one place to another is accomplished by the wind, and not by the unaided feet of the dancers.

As the route lies over the sea, and as the object of these expeditions

[1] See Song 8, p. 512. [2] See p. 468. [3] See p. 548. [4] See Chapter XX.
[5] This is the Atchin version of the name. I did not record the Vao variant.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

is the trade in pigs, it is not surprising to find that these songs are sung during the Maki rite at the moment when the tusked boars, over 200 in number, are brought out for review in order to make sure that they are all there, and are tied at Low Maki to stakes and at High Maki to the upright stones that, ranged on either side of the dancing-ground, are said to resemble the hull and outrigger float of a canoe, the whole approaching Maki being at that moment likened to a sea-going canoe arriving on the shore laden with boars.[1] They are repeated again, with the same symbolism, on the Thirtieth Day after the main sacrifice, when the chief Maki-men challenge the members of other villages to perform a Maki as magnificent as theirs.[2]

They are sung, also, in a context which is not quite so obvious, in connexion with the *Le-tean* song-and-dance cycle on the Fourth Day after the main sacrifice both of Low and High Maki when the new titles and names assumed by the Maki-men are being publicly memorised.[3]

The connexion with the sea is again clear when they are sung on the Fourteenth Day of the mortuary rites for the death of a man of high rank during the launching of the canoe which is to carry his effects back to his mother's village.[4]

Ro-mbulat (Banana-Leaves)

The processional dance with the most elaborate structure is that called *Ro-mbulat*. This word means "dry banana leaves,"[5] referring to the fact that formerly the dancers clothed themselves in such leaves, which rustle when moved, to represent ghosts. Now, however, for some reason that I do not know, they no longer do so, but instead often carry leafy branches in their hands, holding them over their heads so that the body of dancers resembles a moving forest.[6] This dance, often performed on Atchin, seems to be rarer on Vao. In contrast to the *Na-rel*, it is danced chiefly at night, and in the dancing-ground, though it is sometimes performed during the day. Unlike most of the other ritual dances, the songs connected with it are of a comparatively secular nature, those which I heard on Atchin dealing with topical subjects such as accounts of recent fighting, or of sailing expeditions, or of any notable or amusing occurrence that had lately taken place. The dancers all gather at one end of the dancing-ground, facing inwards, when one man steps into the centre and begins singing the refrain of a song. As he does so, he marks time,

[1] See Song 4, p. 381. The word is here used in its restricted sense, referring to the actual day of main sacrifice, when the Maki-men take their new names.
[2] See p. 405. [3] See pp. 428, 430. [4] See p. 552.
[5] Compare Mota *no-qalata*, "dry leaf of a banana" (Codrington, 2).
[6] Deacon, 4, p. 364, describes a similar dance at Lambumbu, but does not say what it is called.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

535

swinging his legs and arms violently forward. The rest immediately join him, with the same bodily movement. After a few seconds of this, the dancers, still singing, beat the ground violently with one foot. Then someone cries out. The rest all reply with shouts and hoots—they call it "shouting for joy." Then they all turn facing the length of the dancing-ground, and, resuming the refrain, dance to the other end with the same thudding step that is used in the *Na-rel*. Meanwhile, the unmarried girls, ranged in a row along the Lower Side of the ground, facing the gongs and hand-in-hand, dive forwards and backwards with a curiously undulating step called "catching crabs," and at odd intervals pierce the air with their high stabbing descant. The refrain is brought to a close by yet further shouts, and the dancers return to the end of the ground at which they had begun, and then repeat the whole dance again, still singing the refrain. Not till they have done this three times does the man who first started up the refrain strike up the first verse. This is immediately taken up by all the dancers, who remain facing him, all marking time and swinging their arms as during the first repetition of the refrain. Then they all stamp their feet on the ground, the refrain is again resumed, and, singing this, they all set off once more down the ground.

There are many small variations of this procedure, which will be given, with their technical terms, in a future volume on Atchin. What I have given here, however, will give some impression of the general form of the dance.

On Vao it is danced during the initiation rites. The only occasion on which I have recorded its performance on this island (though there are doubtless more) is when it is danced by the members of the introducing "line," apparently for their own amusement, during the nights intervening between the official dancing of a more serious circular dance called *Velal* (see below) which leads up to the erection of the upright slit gongs.[1]

Kò-kòke Ru-mbulatean

There is a variant of the above dance called *Kò-kòke ru-mbulatean*, which may be danced as an alternative to other dances during the period leading up to the rites celebrated on the Fourteenth Day after the death of an old man.[2] *Kò-kòke* is a reduplication of the verb *kòke*, "to carry in a bundle," referring to the fact that in this dance a green banana leaf (*rogho na-vele*; Atchin *roha na-wits*) is borne high above the head in the left hand, while in the right hand a bunch of dry banana leaves is carried and beaten in time with the dance against the thigh. This may possibly be connected with the alleged planting by a dead man of a banana tree in the land of the dead.

I have unfortunately no record of any actual performance.

[1] See p. 357. [2] See p. 548.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

Pilagh

Another dance performed during this period is one called *Pilagh*. This is the chief dance performed during the mortuary rites, which preserve the matrilineal elements of the older stratum of Vao culture more completely than any of the other ritual observances. It is in accordance with this that women figure prominently in the dancing, and in particular those called *vene na woroan*,[1] and even have the right on certain occasions to dance inside the Lodge. The same dance is performed also in the dead man's mother's village when, on the Eve of the Fourteenth Day after death, his pillow and other effects are returned to it and a rude hut called after the dead man's name is erected there. It is never, so far as I know, danced on occasions other than those connected with mortuary rites, and a full list of these is given in the Index.

I do not, unfortunately, know anything about the form of the dance except what is suggested by its name, which means "banded rail,"[2] a long-legged wading bird that is one of the totems of a particular family on Atchin. The Atchin form of the word, used both for the rail and for the corresponding dance, is *pila*. Deacon mentions a dance called *bōlōg*, which appears to be the same word, as belonging exclusively to the chiefly rank of Miliun among the Big Nambas.[3]

Dances in Serpentine Course: *Bot-mau*

Lastly, there are a number of occasions on which the dancers pursue a serpentine course from one side of the dancing-ground to the other. This movement, called *tel-telean*, or at other times *gha vire-vire*,[4] enters into a number of processional dances, but I have not sufficient information to say just what it means, or what factor decides when it shall be performed. Its most spectacular performance is in the dance called *Bot-mau*. This is danced during the night preceding the culminating Maki rite, both for Low and High Maki. This night's proceedings are possibly the most wildly exciting in the whole series of rites. Everything is ready for the great sacrifice which is to be performed the next day. Giant hawk-banners (see Fig. 49) have been set up on the sacrificial posts in the middle of the dancing-ground, and all night long the circular dance called *Taur Na-mbak*, to be described below, continues to be danced by members of all villages, who on previous nights have danced separately in rotation, and are now led by the introducing "line" with the Maki-men dancing round

[1] See p. 133.
[2] I am indebted to Mr. T. H. Harrisson for this identification.
[3] Deacon, 4, p. 372. Compare also the Mota *pilage* which means a rail, and metaphorically, a swift runner (Codrington, 2).
[4] Corresponding to the Atchin *bure-bureni*. See pp. 384, 510.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

535 them with torches. From time to time the dance is, however, interrupted by the procession called *Bot-mas*, in honour of the home-bred circle-tuskers that are about to be sacrificed. This dance is performed chiefly by women, the Maki-men's patrilineal kinsfolk, who, in double file and each holding in her left hand a branch of the *tawé* tree and in her right hand a torch of which the lighted end is dragged along the ground behind her (both symbols of a circle-tusker), dance in serpentine course from one end of the ground to the other. The torch is dragged because they are women, but the procession is headed by two men and the rear brought up by two more, members of the introducing "line," who carry the same symbols high up above the shoulder. Each Quarter-Lodge of the home-village is represented by one such procession, and each repeats the dance as many times as there are home-bred circle-tuskers to be sacrificed by its male members. After the members of each Quarter-Lodge have performed their part the correct number of times the circular dance is resumed until the next arrives. When all have finished, *Taur Na-mbat* is then danced on till dawn, when the hawk-banners are hurled to the ground.[1]

CIRCULAR DANCES

General.

The reference to *Taur Na-mbat* that has just been made has given some faint indication of the atmosphere of intense excitement surrounding dances of the circular type. To the European eye and ear the processional dances and the songs that issue from the combined throats of the dancers are thrilling and unaccustomed enough, but the effect of the circular dances, which take place always at night and frequently all night long, is beyond any adequate description.

Unlike the processional dances, the circular dances are associated exclusively with the two main ritual cycles, namely Gong-Raising and the Maki, and I have already shown that they probably originated in circular dancing-grounds in which the gongs occupied a central position, such as are found on the mainland of Malekula and as far south as Fate.

There are, in Vao, four such dances, the most important of which, and that which leads up to the culminating scene of the Maki when the main sacrifice takes place, touches depths of native culture which I do not profess to be able fully to disentangle. The other three fulfil comparatively simple functions.

These four circular dances are called:

Turri Na-mbe (*Gong-Raising*), danced only for the erection of a new set of gongs.

Velal, performed mainly as a preliminary dance both at the erection of a new set of gongs and at Low and High Maki.

[1] For full description see pp. 331, 344.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

535

Hek-hekelean (*Settling-Down*), performed only at Low Maki, and leading up to

Taure, *Taur Na-mbak* or *Veluan Na-mbak*, all variants of the most important circular dance leading up to the main sacrifice, performed respectively at High and Low Maki and at the special Maki performed for the erection of a *ghamal*.

I did not witness any of these dances on Vao, but saw and took part in several of the corresponding dances on Atchin. In their main lines, that is to say in the general structure of the dance and in the positions occupied by the dancers, they are all alike. The differences occur in the different rhythms played on the gongs, which at the same time govern the difference in step and in the type of song sung. As an example of the general structure I will, under the heading of Gong-Raising, give a brief general account of this dance as it is performed on Atchin, after which I will limit myself to a discussion of the circular dances performed on Vao, stating the occasions on which each is danced and, so far as I know it, its cultural significance.

Turei Na-mbe (Gong-Raising)

Including a description of this dance as performed on Atchin

The name of this dance speaks for itself, being derived from *tur*, to "stand, or set up," and *na-mbe*, a "gong." The same name is given to the whole series of rites leading up to the erection of the gongs, and, to avoid confusion of too many native terms, I will refer to both as "Gong-Raising," which is a literal translation of the native term, referring to the dance itself when necessary as the "*Gong-Raising* dance." This dance is performed only when new gongs are being set up.[1]

The following account is a brief record in general terms based on my own observation of the all-night *Gong-Raising* dance as performed on the Eve of the Raising of the Gongs at the Atchin village of Emil Marur on October 15th, 1914.[2] The dance may not be precisely the same as that performed on Vao, but it resembles it closely enough to serve as an illustration of what such dances are like.

The position of the dancers is given in Fig. 45. The guests, that is to say the male members of other villages or else the introducing "line" of the home-village (or all of these, as in the culminating dance from which this account is taken), cluster round the posts erected in the middle of the dancing-ground, with their leaders standing in the centre, each leader holding a bamboo stave on which he beats time when the gongs are not being sounded. Round them the hosts, the Maki-men, dance with lighted

[1] See pp. 350-8.

[2] A full account, together with technical terms in the Atchin language, will be given in a later volume.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

535 torches, and round these again stand the women,[1] who do not move round but dance where they are, often holding hands and performing swift undulating movements towards the centre and then back again. Each group forming one of the three concentric circles acts independently

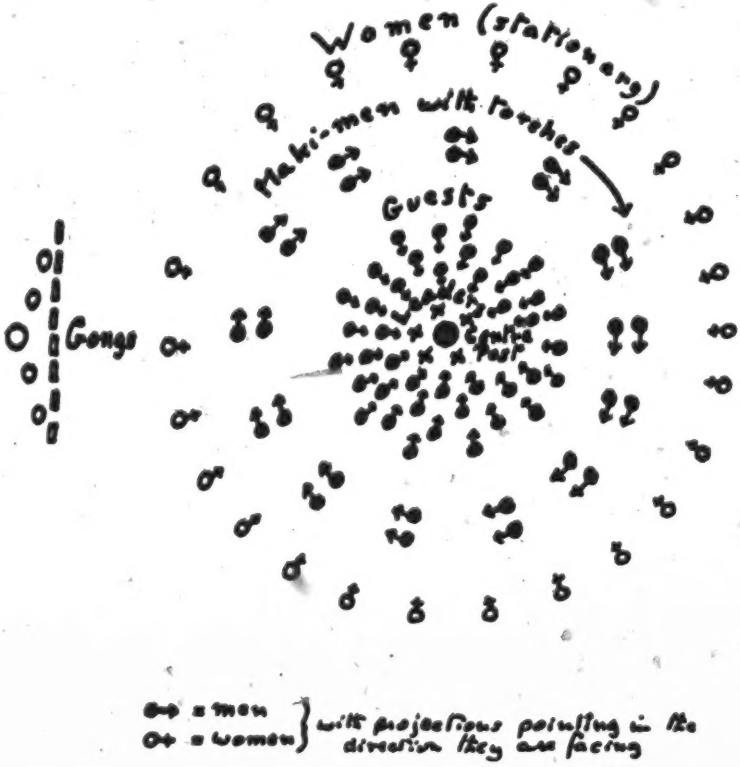


FIG. 45

Diagram to illustrate the dance of *Gong-Raising* as performed on Atchin.

of the others, though in concert with them. The dance begins with a prelude by the gongs, manned by members of the introducing "line," which beat out the "leaf" or refrain of the rhythm proper to the dance. While this is being sounded the dancers stand still. This done, the guests set up a high falsetto shout or "cheer," and the gongs then burst forth anew, this time with the rhythm proper to the "fruit" or verse. During

[1] Through an oversight, I omitted to note who these women are.

1: Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

this time the dancers have all been standing still. They now stamp with bent knees, the gongs cease, and one of the leaders, followed by all the guests, starts singing unaccompanied the song-refrain, the singers swinging their arms and legs backwards and forwards as in the dance called *Banana-Leaves*. Only the guests sing, with the women in the outer ring chanting their high descant. The Maki-men dance round with upraised torches, but silent.

The gongs then once more strike up the refrain, and the guests cease singing and begin the movement peculiar to the dance. This may consist in complicated steps performed facing the gongs, as is the case in the *Gong-Raising* dance, or, particularly in those called *Hek-hekelean* and *Taur Na-mbak*, which are the chief Maki dances, in running round in an anti-clockwise direction with special steps, while the Maki-men dance round clockwise with dignified gait contrasting strongly with the quick and sometimes extraordinary movements of the guests.

Suddenly, the gong-rhythms cease, the guests all cheer with high falsetto cries, and with a stab the gongs strike in again with the "fruit" or verse-rhythm. With hardly a pause, the same mad dance begins again with all its movements as before, till stopped again by the falsetto cheering of the guests. There is a moment of apparent unutterable confusion while the dancers change their step into the quieter swinging motion. The gongs cease again, and the refrain is again sung, the guests marking time while they sing, the silent Maki-men still dancing round with raised torches, and the women holding hands, swaying and piercing the air with their high notes.

All this has been preparatory to the singing of the verse. Now the excitement suddenly ceases. The gongs remain silent, and a calm dignified movement sets in while the guests, with slow swinging step, sing the first verse, during which the Maki-men cease dancing and face inwards with torches lowered to the ground, and the women stand motionless and silent beyond, for, while they may join in with the refrain, the words of the song are for the men alone.

The moment the verse is over, there is another cheer, the gongs once more strike up the refrain, the guests repeat the special step belonging to the dance, the Maki-men dance round with raised torches, and the women in the outer ring resume their undulating step. Then the gongs cease again, and the refrain is once more sung.

When, as is usual, the song has several verses, the second verse is now begun, followed again by the same sequence of movements always ending with the refrain, and so on, till the whole song has been sung.

Then there is a short pause, and a new song is started, and the entire gamut of refrain and verse, gong-rhythms, dance-steps and intermittent cheering is gone through for every song.

This is kept up all night without a pause, dancers and gong-beaters

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

535 relieving one another at will without break in the continuous uproar. Sometimes the pace and volume of the sound will slacken, then again swell forth as some new party joins or a better-known song is begun.

Each song has its own tune, composed to the rhythm of the dance. On any given night the most important songs belonging to the cycle will be sung first, but, after these, fresh songs may be struck up by any individual singer starting the refrain. Some will be taken up, while others, not so popular or started by some unimportant or unpopular guests, will be drowned out by rival singers. There will be a moment or two of indescribable confusion while two rival parties are struggling for the acceptance of a given song, but soon one will prevail, and when it does the victorious party will cheer, the gongs will strike in, the special step be resumed, and the song then proceeds to its allotted end. Sometimes a verse may be forgotten or imperfectly remembered; then the song will peter out, with cries and jeers from all the dancers, or may be retrieved by someone with a better memory singing out the words. The leaders of the guests maintain the rhythm all the time by beating on their bamboo staves.

535 373 Dancers from time to time drop out, and sit round fires lit about the dancing-ground, talking and eating puddings and bananas. Other fires are maintained for the special use of the Maki-men who dance with torches round the guests, fresh torches being stacked around them to replace those which burn out. One solitary torch of huge dimensions burns all night, standing erect at one end of the dancing-ground.

535 As I have said, this dance, witnessed on Atchin, may not agree in all particulars with its counterpart as danced on Vao, but it will give at least some idea of what such dances are like. I will now proceed to give an account of the occasions on which the three remaining circular dances are performed and, so far as I am able, their cultural significance.

Velal

This is probably the simplest and least significant of the circular dances. The name is derived from *vel*, the ordinary word for "to dance," but I am unable to explain the final syllable. This seems to be a kind of preparatory dance. It is performed during the early stages of each main division in the long cycle of rites, and before all these opening occasions the songs are publicly rehearsed and practised in the dancing-ground, the dancers sitting down in the positions to be occupied later in the dance. At each culminating point, however, it is replaced by one of the more important circular dances. It is thus the first dance in the series of rites leading up to the erection of the gongs,[1] but is replaced at the culmination

[1] See p. 356.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
OOI2 Malekula OOI2

535

of the rite by the dance of *Gong-Raising* itself. It is also the first dance to be performed at the opening of the rites for Low Maki, when the chief business in hand is the search for and transport to the dancing-ground of the large table-stones for the dolmen, and again, several years later, when enough pigs and yams have been collected for the new series of rites leading up to its erection.[1] At the culmination of the rite, however, it is again replaced, this time first by the dance called *Settling-Down*, and then by *Taur Na-mbak*. For High Maki it is in the same way danced first in the opening stages of the rite when the stones for the stone-platform are being sought out and the stone-platform itself built, and again when the monoliths are being collected and set up, but is replaced by *Taur Na-mbak* at the culminating series of rites leading up to the main sacrifice.[2]

Just as, in these cases, it has occupied a preparatory position always leading up to something better, so, two years or more after the culminating points of both Low and High Maki, it is again danced during the final rites winding up all the protracted proceedings, when the restrictions placed on the female relatives of the Maki-men are finally removed.[3]

Velal thus not only leads up to, but also down from, the central points of ritual experience, just as in the Christian Mass the preparatory rites which lead up to the central act are balanced after it is over by lesser rites leading the emotion gently down into more mundane channels.

Hek-hekelean (Settling-Down)

This word, which in Atchin is *sek-sekeleen*, is the reduplicated nominal form of a word common in the Small Islands, of which the Vao form is *hag* and the Atchin forms are *sek*, "to rest upon," and *sakel*, "to sit." In both islands the word is used also in a figurative way for "settling down" to a job of work.[4] It is in this latter figurative sense that the word is here used, for the dance called by this name is performed at a point in the ritual cycle of Low Maki at which the culminating act is approaching, when all the tusked boars are ready for the chief sacrifice, and when, therefore, no more delays are allowed to occur and the performers from now on "settle down" without reserve to intensive prosecution of the culminating rites. For this reason, I will refer to it in the following pages by the literal translation of the word, namely *Settling-Down*.

Settling-Down is far from being the most important dance-cycle of the Maki, but is in the nature of a preparatory dance preceding *Taur Na-mbak*, which it closely resembles, and is the culminating Low Maki circular

[1] See pp. 363, 366, 396. [2] See pp. 412, 419. [3] See p. 406.

[4] Godefroy (1, 1934, p. 210) mentions the Vao expression *se ha-hag* as being used for what he refers to as "forced" (i.e. community) labour. Compare also Mota *sage*, "to settle down, sink downwards"; same word as Motlav *hag*, "to sit" (Codrington, 2).

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

535 dance. In High Maki both *Settling-Down* and *Taur Na-mbak* are replaced by the most important circular dance of all, called *Taure*.

Songs belonging to the *Settling-Down* cycle are first sung, after the dancing of *Velal* is finished, when the table-stone for the dolmen is being hauled up from the beach during the preparatory rites of Low Maki,[1] but are changed on nearing the dancing-ground to those of *Taur Na-mbak*. It is not danced, however, till after the dolmen has been erected and, as I have said, the main sacrificial rite is approaching. Then it is danced in rotation by all villages till the actual date of the chief sacrifice is announced, when it is replaced by the dancing, in the same rotation, of *Taur Na-mbak*.[2]

The important position of the dance is shown by the fact that, alone of all dances so far as I know, the right to perform it has to be bought by the Maki-men from members of their own introducing "line," and also from members of all the other villages on the island. This act is symbolised by the handing over of the stick (*ne-mbal*) with which time is beaten by the leader of the dance. Its preparatory nature, however, is shown by the fact that, once the right to dance *Settling-Down* has been bought, this act is not repeated either for *Taur Na-mbak* or for *Taure*, since the purchase of the one at the same time confers the right of dancing the others.[3]

Several days after the last visiting village has come to dance, and before the final combined performance, a dance called *Vin-buel* takes place. The name signifies "Dance of no consequence." I am unable to say what form it takes. The same dance is repeated at the same period before the dancing of *Taure* for High Maki.[4]

Taure, Taur Na-mbak, Veluan Na-mbak

Taure is the most important all-night dance of High Maki. It differs from the *Gong-Raising* dance (as also does *Settling-Down*) in that the guests, instead of facing the centre, in this case marked by a young erythrina tree, dance anti-clockwise round it, in a direction opposite to that taken by the Maki-men, their leaders beating time on the bamboo stick called *ne-mbal*. In Low Maki its place is taken by a variant of the same dance called *Taur Na-mbak*, and in the special Maki performed for the erection of a *ghamal* by yet another variant called *Veluan Na-mbak*.

When danced.

Songs from the *Taur Na-mbak* cycle are sung during the preparatory rites for Low Maki while dragging the table-stone for the dolmen into the dancing-ground, and during High Maki songs of the *Taure* cycle are similarly sung while hauling up the large monolith. At High Maki *Taure* is the only circular dance performed during the rites occupying the year

[1] See pp. 365 ff. [2] See pp. 370 ff. [3] See pp. 369, 421. [4] See pp. 372, 422.

1: Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

of the culminating sacrifice. At Low Maki *Taur Na-mbak* is preceded by *Settling-Down* and is not itself formally danced till the day on which the giant hawk-banners are erected in the centre of the dancing-ground and the date of the main sacrifice is announced. This date must by precedent always be fixed for the 17th, the 27th or the 37th day after that on which the announcement is made, and it is during the intervening period that

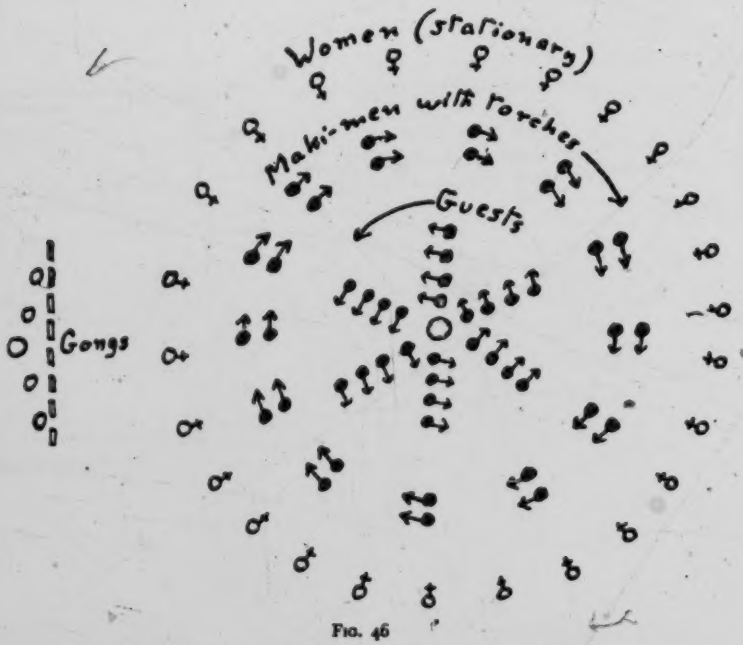


FIG. 46

Diagram to illustrate the dance of *Taure* and of *Taur Na-mbak*.

When there is only one party of guests they swing in a single line round the erythrina tree, ending each dance with a shout facing the gongs. This figure illustrates the final all-night performance when the six parties representing the six villages form themselves into six radial lines. (For diagrams illustrating similar dances see Deacon, 4, Fig. 34 (from the district of Lagalag in North-West Malekula), and Baker, 3, p. 3 (from South-East Santo).)

Taur Na-mbak is danced every night by the introducing "line" of Maki-men, joined at stated intervals, in due order, by members of the other Vao villages and by parties from the mainland villages and from the other Small Islands. This occurs both for Low and High Maki, and lasts all night long. Only on the penultimate night does the dancing cease at midnight, to allow the dancers to gather strength for the ensuing culminating rites. On the Eve of the Maki itself (using this word in its

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

535 restricted sense for the day on which the main sacrifice takes place) it is again and for the last time danced all night long, being interrupted from time to time by the dancing of *Bot-mau* that has already been described, and the culminating act takes place at dawn, when the hawk-banners are torn down from their posts and trampled underfoot. This is followed, during the cool hours of the morning, by the performances of the formal figure-dances and comedies called *na-leng*, and during the day by an endless series of rites leading up to the mass sacrifice of boars in the afternoon and to the most solemn occasion of all when, at dusk, the chief sacrificial tuskers are ritually killed on the stone-platform and the chief Maki-men take the highest supernumerary ranks.

Associated with ancient form of the rite.

It is difficult to assess accurately the significance of these three dances. Some understanding of it may, however, be achieved by a comparative study of the names by which they are known, and of their ritual significance in other respects.

If we consider first the word *Taure* or *Taur* alone, we find that a dance called by variants of this name holds an equally important place in the public graded society not only of Vao but also of all those parts of Malekula of which we have adequate record.[1] Two facts, moreover, point to the fact that it is extremely ancient, and certainly pre-dating the Maki in its present form. These are, in the first place, that in the district of Mewun on the west coast of Malekula, which till recently had no graded society comparable to the Mangki of the surrounding districts, and had only two fires, one for men and one for women, nevertheless a man could acquire prestige by erecting a club-house, the privilege of doing this being purchased from a man who had already constructed one, and the transaction involved the payment of pigs and the performance of a dance called *teur*. No images were set up for this comparable in any way to those set up for the Mangki.[2] The evidence from Mewun suggests, therefore, that this dance originally formed part of a pre-Maki form of rite in which there were no graded ranks or titles, but only a single fire for such males as were admitted to it.

If we now turn to the only other place from which, so far as I know, this dance has been reported, we find ourselves again forced to a similar conclusion. This is South Raga, where a dance of the same name, here pronounced *tairan* (of which the verbal form is *tair*), is the last and most important of three public dances in which songs are sung in honour of sacrificial boars, the sacrificer recounting in them the hardships and

[1] The recorded forms of the word are:—Vao *taure* or *taur* (nominal form *taurean*); Atchin *tour* (*touren*) (Layard, 9); Wala *taur* (*tauren*) (Layard, 9); Big Nambas *taur* (Deacon, 4, p. 372); Lambumbu *taur* (Deacon, 4, pp. 356, 362); Seniang *taur* (Deacon, 4, Chapters X to XIV).

[2] Deacon, 4, p. 340. The full name given for this dance is *nitur hut nasi* or *touga*.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

535

adventures he has gone through in acquiring them, and the number and grades of the pigs he has given in exchange.[1] The important thing to note is that this dance, though now performed as part of the graded society ritual, did not originally belong to it, but forms part of an older form of rite called *Lo-sal*[2] on to which the introduced public graded society has been grafted.

It is thus clear that we have to do here with a very fundamental aspect of the rite, apparently ante-dating the introduction of ranks. Since this aspect of the rite, represented by the South Raga *Lo-sal*, is that primarily concerned with sacrifice to the maternal ghosts, it is not surprising that the songs should be about the boars which, as we have seen in the chapter on pigs, are in Vao (and almost certainly elsewhere) identified with the Guardian Ghost and, through her, with the male ancestors in the matrilineal line.

Taur means "to mourn."

This, then, gives us a glimpse as to what the meaning of the dance actually is, namely an act in honour of the male members of the matrilineal ancestral line through their representatives, the tusked boars, by whose sacrifice the Maki-men are themselves about to participate in the same mystic union. Sacrifice, however, involves death, and this brings us to a second point, namely that the word *taur*, in its various forms in Vao and the remaining Small Islands, is a mortuary term combining the meanings of "to mourn," "to blacken the face in mourning," "to enter into a period of seclusion" (after the Maki, as after the death of a man of high rank), and "to fast."[3]

The word *Taur* or *Taure* thus combines in itself the acts of honouring the dead and of mourning the new death that the Maki-men are about to inflict upon the boars and, through them, symbolically upon the ancestors and on themselves, always remembering that mourning in this sense is for the native no act of despair but one of anticipating a new and yet more fulfilled life.

Na-mbak probably indicates sexual licence.

As we have seen, the word *Taur*, when applied to the variant of the dance performed at Low Maki, is combined with the word *Na-mbak*. The corresponding word in Atchin is *Ni-mbek*, which, in the history of the Maki which I obtained on that island, is applied to the earliest form of monolith-Maki introduced some seven generations ago. The whole Maki rite as performed at that time is still known on Atchin as *Maki Ni-mbek*. Though the Atchin word *tour* (corresponding to the Vao *taur*) is still used for some portion of this dance, the name of the whole dance on Atchin which corresponds to the Vao *Taur Na-mbak* is *Welen Ni-mbek*,

[1] Tattevin, I, 1927, p. 88. [2] See pp. 341, 721. [3] See p. 536.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
OO12 Malekula OO12

535 corresponding to the *Veluan Na-mbak* performed for the erection of a *ghamal* on Vao. *Welen* and *Veluan* are both variants in their respective islands of the ordinary word used for "to dance." As the proper name for a particular dance, however, the word is chiefly associated, in the form of *Welu*, with the district of Tasmant in South-West Santo, where a dance of this name (which unfortunately has nowhere been described) holds the same prominent position in the graded society ritual as *Taur* and its variants do in Malekula.[1] This is but one of the many instances of how in the Small Islands traits from a number of cultural districts overlap.

535 786 Returning to the Vao word *Na-mbak* and Atchin *Ni-mbek*, the only suggestion that I can make is that they are related to the Vao word *bak-bakean*, *mbagh-mbagh*[2] or *mbek-mbek*, used for a propitiatory gift made either to ancestors or to the living in order to obtain favour or to ward off revenge.[3] The corresponding word *pakapaka* is used in Mota for the gift made by a lover to his girl, and is therefore now used there as a synonym for extra-marital sexual intercourse. This gives, I think, the clue to the word as used for the dance, since one of the salient features accompanying the Atchin dance called *Welen Ni-mbek* is that of sexual licence in which the ordinary laws of exogamy are disregarded, and there is a very general promiscuity throughout the night while the dancing is taking place. It is probably for this reason that the corresponding dance in Wala is called *Melingen Ni-mbek*, the word *Melingen* meaning "a bed."

Significance of composite name.

The motives that appear from this comparative study to lie behind the Vao dance of *Taure* thus seem to be: honouring the dead, mourning (in the native sense) the death of the tusked boars that are about to be sacrificed, boasting of the virtues both of the boars and of the Maki-men who reared or traded for them, and (when combined in Low Maki with the word *Na-mbak*) sexual licence. The dance belongs, as we have seen, to the pre-Maki stratum of ritual more particularly connected with ghosts of the male members of the matrilineal line. Honouring the dead and the sacrifice of boars both form part of the re-birth ritual which is the essence of the Maki. The sexual licence involves a complex mixture of emotions. In the first place, it expresses the fertility aspect of the rite, closely connected with re-birth. In the second place, the fact that all the rules of exogamy are here broken is closely connected with legends

[1] Deacon, 3, pp. 477, 491. It is interesting to note that this word *Welu* turns up again far to the south, in Nguna, where a rite (probably a dance) of this name is performed in connexion with "the making of a sacred man." This rite includes the making of a new house, and, it is interesting to note, is connected with a belief in a "god of the land" called Sugbwe (Capell, 1, pp. 71-2), this being a form of the word Sukwe (see p. 219).

[2] See p. 437.

[3] The Atchin word *Ni-mbek* is not to be confused with its homonym *ni-mbek* meaning "banyan tree," which is *na-mbangge* in Vao.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

concerning the incest of most culture-heroes in the Small Islands, and in particular of To-wewe, the founder of the present Vao Maki,[1] and expresses the supernatural power of the Maki-men to override earthly restrictions.[2] And in the third place, it must not be forgotten that these same Maki-men are about to enter into a period of seclusion and abstinence that for the least of them will last thirty days, and may last for as many as two or more years, so that the orgiastic outlet of the preceding weeks may be regarded as a necessary outlet, giving strength to bear the ensuing period of restraint.

I said at the outset that this dance represents many aspects that are obscure. The above description is the most accurate that I have been able to arrive at regarding the general ideology surrounding the dance, and represents a kind of composite picture drawn from various sources all over the group. My time in Vao was not long enough to allow me to verify how far each detail is applicable to this island, and it was not my good fortune in any of the islands to witness the dance myself.

Form of the dance. Descriptions by other writers from all parts of Malekula.

Regarding the form of the dance, all I can say is that it conforms to the general pattern of circular dances as already given in my brief description of the *Gong-Raising* dance, except that, like *Settling-Down*, it is more spectacular in that the guests do not remain stationary round the posts, but dance in an anti-clockwise direction round them while the Maki-men dance clockwise with torches between them and the outer circle of women.

Since this is the most spectacular of all the all-night dances, several writers have recorded their impressions of it as seen in different parts of Malekula. None of these accounts give the structure of the dance in any detail, but all agree in being overwhelmed by its wild beauty, and anyone interested in the study of dramatic effect for its own sake will be repaid for reading them. The first was written as long ago as the year 1895 by the late Admiral Boyle Somerville, who, when a lieutenant in H.M.S. *Dart*, engaged in survey work, happened to land on the island of Uripiv when the culminating act of a Maki was in progress. There was a terrific rain-storm, which in no way deterred either the natives from carrying out the rite or the young lieutenant from attempting to see it. He arrived just as the all-night dance was beginning, and gives an impressive, if at times facetious, account of the beginning of it, though the natives insisted on his leaving when the women began to appear, hinting at the sexual licence already mentioned.[3]

[1] See p. 283. [2] See p. 433.

[3] Somerville, pp. 198-200. Next day he was more successful, and his description of the rites leading up to the main sacrifice make interesting reading when compared with my own account from Vao. The date, 1895, which is not stated in the book, was kindly communicated to me by the admiral's brother, Colonel Cameron F. Somerville of Drishane House, Skibbereen, County Cork.

Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942 OO12 Malekula OO12

535 Deacon gives a fuller account of a performance of *teur* that he witnessed at Lambumbu,[1] which contains many of the same elements as the Small Islands version. He also describes the performance of a dance called by this name during the rites for the erection of a new gong-orchestra in Lagalag,[2] by which it would appear that in this neighbourhood all circular dances, whatever their probable variation in detail, are known by this name.

Another short but vivid impression, this time from Matanavat on the north coast, evidently referring to the same dance, has been recorded by Harrisson, whom it equally impressed.[3]

NA-LENG: FIGURE-DANCES AND MUMMING PLAYS

536 535 On an entirely different plane from any of the processional or circular dances described above are the figure-dances called *na-leng*.

While the former stir the deepest emotions, and for this very reason the average European, though vaguely aware of the tremendous forces that are at work in them, and moved beyond words by the intense, almost ecstatic feelings they arouse, cannot hope ever really to understand them, the figure-dances express a much more conscious side of the natives' creative power, and are thus more easy for the white man to appreciate in their full formal beauty. They are, in fact, the supreme expression of the natives' conscious artistic sense, which is of a very high order.

They represent in miniature all those things which the Greeks classed under the heading of Drama. For the word *na-leng* includes:

(*a*) Mumming Plays of two kinds, namely
  (i) Tragedies dealing with mythological subjects;
  (ii) Comedies which are skits on everyday life.

(*b*) Formal Figure-Dances, consisting of a chorus acting in conjunction with players of individual rôles.

The main difference between these and the classical drama lies in the fact that, apart from the intermittent accompaniment of the gongs, the dramatic performances are carried through in dumb show, the imitative powers of the natives, in which they are past masters, taking the place of words.

536 534 535 Mumming plays and the figure-dances are both called *na-leng*, and both are distinguished from all other features of native culture by the fact that the actors and dancers wear ankle-rattles made of the seed-cases

[1] Deacon, 4, p. 363.

[2] Ibid., 4, pp. 513 ff., including a plan of the dancing-ground and the position of the dancers on p. 515.

[3] Harrisson, 2, p. 31.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
OO12 Malekula OO12

of the *pangium edule* strung together on bands of soft plaited string. The note of these is softer than that of the Morris bells of England, since the comparative shrillness of the metal is absent, and when, as sometimes happens, as many as a hundred feet strike the ground together, the sound is at once voluminous and sweet.

The performances usually occur at dawn on the day of an important rite after the close of the preceding all-night dance. The occasions of which I have record on Vao are the morning of the day on which a new set of gongs is put up, and the morning of the Thirtieth Day after the main sacrifice both of Low and High Maki.[1]

They are probably performed on other occasions as well, for each *na-leng* has a special name, and a women's dance called *rokaik*,[2] connected with the killing of home-bred circle-tuskers and performed on the day of the chief sacrifice at High Maki, was said to be the same as the Atchin *na-leng wishewin*, or women's "*na-leng*."

Godefroy also records that "during the interminable Maki rites they perform a dance which takes them to *bakeran*," which means the sky, or "heaven" as he terms it.[3] This may be another *na-leng*, or may refer to one of the major Maki dances such as *Taure*.

On each occasion proceedings open with the performance of a series of mumming plays. These are performed in rotation by the members of the visiting villages, both from Vao and from the mainland and other Small Islands, who have already been taking part in the all-night dance. These may be either tragedies, that is to say plays based on mythological subjects though treated as a rule in a burlesque way, or else pantomimes representing everyday matters such as fishing or feeding fowls, or skits on recent events. The mythological origin of these mumming plays is shown by the fact that, in addition to the wearing of ankle-rattles, each actor either wears a mask (sure sign that he is a ghost), or else has his face covered by a veil consisting of strips of the white inner bark of certain trees tied on to a bamboo frame that rests on the head, on to the top of which is fastened a modelled or carved image of the man, fish, bird, or even inanimate object such as a boat, that he may for the time being represent. Thus clothed and disguised, the actors play their parts, always observing one rule, that they never remain still, but when supposed to be standing they must nevertheless dance, and when moving from one place to another must never walk or run, but must proceed with swift shuffling steps that cause their ankle-rattles to maintain a ceaseless musical clatter.

After the mumming plays are over, it is the turn of the home-people to perform a figure-dance. In this the main body of dancers is formed by the Maki-men themselves. They form, however, only the chorus. The parts of the individual star-dancers are taken by men of the introducing "line," the Maki-men's "fathers" or "sons."

[1] See p. 402. [2] See Song 5, p. 385. [3] See p. 214.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

536 535 *Series of dances on Atchin represents gradual initiation of Maki-men into the mysteries.*

I did not myself see any of these performances on Vao, nor get any detailed accounts of them there, though I obtained some wooden images of fowls that had been worn on the head over their veils by the actors in one of the burlesque secular comedies that had been recently performed at the time of my visit.[1] I did, however, see some of the figure-dances on Atchin, and obtained also a general account of them as they occur in the Maki on that island, from which it appeared that, being performed at intervals of several years throughout the rite, they form a sequence illustrating the gradual initiation of the Maki-men into the mysteries of the rite.[2]

One of the characteristics of all these dances is that the Maki-men who constitute the main body of dancers and also the chorus are invariably formed into a square, ideally consisting of 100 men ranged in 10 lines of 10 men each. If, as often happens, there are not enough men the number may be reduced, as in cases I myself witnessed, in which the square consisted on one occasion of 49 men, formed of 7 lines of 7 men each, and on another of 5 lines of 5 men each, making a total of 25. The leader beats time on a portable bamboo slit gong. In the first figure-dance of the sequence the Maki-men go through a series of evolutions in which they represent small birds, symbolic of their as yet unfledged condition. There is a preparatory encircling movement, in which the whole body of dancers, one line following the other, break their square formation and form themselves into a spiral, finally re-forming into a square again at the other end of the ground. This is followed by a second preparatory movement, in which they again break their square and dance in single file in serpentine course from side to side of the ground with gestures representing swimming, as if they were crossing a sea-channel. After this they again form into a square, and the most spectacular phase of the dance begins. This again consists of two movements, in the first of which two men of the introducing "line" appear from outside the dancing-ground equipped with bows and arrows. These are called "bowmen," and they enact a complicated series of movements round and about the square representing a mock battle. Finally comes the most impressive scene of all. The bowmen retire, and in place of them comes a single dancer, also belonging to the introducing "line," with his body painted to represent the hawk. With arms outstretched as wings he dances in and around the square, threading his way backwards and forwards between the serried ranks of the Maki-men who form it. He then retires, making way for a yet more resplendent dancer, also be-

[1] See Layard, 1, Nos. 210, 211.

[2] The mumming plays show a similar tendency, but as the mythology referred to is peculiar to Atchin I will reserve publication of it for a future volume on that island.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

longing to the introducing "line," and likewise painted to represent a hawk, and called "the hawk pouncing on its prey." This "hawk" again dances round and in and out among ranks of Maki-men, at first in a peaceful way as did the first. At a given moment, however, he adopts a threatening attitude. His body sways from side to side, his "wings" raised first one side and then the other, till, finally, he dances a short distance away from the square, and then, turning round, swoops down upon the mass of Maki-men representing small birds who cower and shuffle, breaking formation to gather in a frightened formless mass around the feet of the "hawk" who, with outstretched arms, stands in their midst surveying the carnage.

So ends the first dance of the series. This is followed after an interval of years by another, in which women take part but of which I did not obtain details. This is again followed, when the stone-platform is being roofed in preparation for High Maki, by another in which boys dress up as women and the whole dance symbolises sexual connexion. There is another on the actual day of sacrifice, in which women again take part, which is said to correspond to the Vao *rokasik*. On the Thirtieth Day after the sacrifice the first dance described is repeated, and on the Hundredth Day there is yet another in which the sacrificers' wives' brothers take part.

The first dance described is also repeated on the Thirtieth Day after initiation, when the candidates issue from their seclusion. I myself witnessed it on one such occasion, and a detailed account of this performance, with photographs and technical terms, will be given in a later volume on Initiation in Atchin.

Meaning of the Dances.

Similar dances are performed in all the other Small Islands, and there is no doubt that those performed on Vao follow approximately the same lines. There is no space in this volume to go fully into the question of what these dances mean. Some indication, however, can be gathered from a comparative study of other forms of the same dance as it is performed in other parts of Malekula. The most illuminating of these is the account given by Deacon of the performance in the Seniang district of South-West Bay, where what in the Small Islands is spread out in a series of dances with intervals of years between them is there confined within the scope of a single dramatic performance. Though Deacon was himself unable to suggest what this dance meant, a detailed examination in the light of the Small Islands performances and of other aspects of Malekulan culture makes it clear that this dance represents at one and the same time (*a*) a sacred marriage, (*b*) an initiation rite, and (*c*) the Journey of the Dead. Students of comparative religion will not be surprised at this combination, which is a common one found throughout the religions of the Ancient East. The most important element in it is the Journey of

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
OO12 Malekula OO12

the Dead, of which one feature has already been met with in my brief summary of the Atchin *na-leng*, namely the swimming movement representing the crossing of the channel into the land of the dead.

Sand-tracings and the Journey of the Dead.

The other, and much more important element from the point of view of comparative culture, is to be found in the pattern of the final movement of the dance, in which the Maki-men form a solid body arranged in rows and members of the introducing "line" thread their way through them. Members of the introducing "line" occupy in the Maki the position of those already fully initiated, and comparison with the version of the Journey of the Dead as recorded by Deacon from Seniang shows that this progression of initiates between the ranks formed by the Maki-men corresponds with the path followed by the dead man through a maze-like design drawn in the sand by the Guardian Ghost, a figure that the dead man must know how to complete before entering into the land of the dead through the cave by which she sits. If he does not know how to do this, the Guardian Ghost devours him. I have shown elsewhere how this maze-design represents the labyrinthine entrance to the tomb in the civilisations of the Ancient East, of which the existing Malekulan belief is a faint echo. Sand-tracings and figure-dances of *na-leng* type are thus both seen to be derived from labyrinths constructed to trap the ignorant and to prevent access to the land of the dead to all except those who, through the performance of due ritual and the resulting acquirement of the necessary knowledge, have earned the right to enter.[1] There is no space here to go into the details of this matter. A short summary, together with some of the sand-tracings, is given in Chapter XXV, and those interested in following it up further can refer to my article on *Maze-Dances and the Ritual of the Labyrinth in Malekula*.[2]

This article points out the connexion of labyrinths with initiation in many parts of the world that have been influenced by the same megalithic civilisations that have given rise to the Maki in Malekula. One of the chief conclusions drawn in it is the dual nature of the megalithic stream that touched these shores, representing in all probability two separate migrations, having their origins in the ancient centres of civilisation. Of these the first was predominately matrilineal, bringing with it the belief in the home of the dead in a cave, together with the dolmen as chief sacrificial monument. The later was, on the other hand, predominately patrilineal and brought with it the belief in the home of the dead in a volcano, together with the stone-platform and the monolith. These two layers of culture have already been met with frequently throughout these

[1] Compare Mota *lenga*, used as a noun for "a woman's dance" and as a verb "to be indistinct, bewildering" (Codrington, 2).

[2] Layard, 6.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

pages. The fresh information derived from a brief comparative study of the *na-leng* in the Northern New Hebrides is that it is to the earlier of these, namely that primarily connected with the cave and the dolmen, that this type of dance and the accompanying mumming plays belong. It is thus not surprising to find that in the Small Islands these dances are especially associated with the matrilineal island of Oba, in which the later form of graded society represented by the Malekulan Maki is absent. What is more significant still is the situation in South Raga. Here there is a class system of kinship based on matrilineal moieties on to which patrilineal descent groups have later been imposed. While in the regulation of kinship both lines of descent are given equal weight, in overt social organisation patrilineal descent predominates to the extent that residence is patrilocal, as it is in Vao. In the same way, there are in South Raga two elements in the public graded society, firstly the more overtly prominent and newer form of rite embodied in the Warsangul society, which corresponds to the Maki in Malekula, and secondly the less overt but more fundamentally important rite of Lo-sal, which will be referred to later [1] and which is based on the fulfilment of obligations due to the maternal ancestors. What is important to note here is that, of these two elements in South Raga, the figure-dance called *leng* (said to be danced in honour of tusked boars and which corresponds to the Small Islands *na-leng*) belongs, like *tairen* (Vao *taur*), to the older matrilineal rite in which the main sacrificial monument is the dolmen.

Examples from neighbouring districts. Prominence of the sex element.

Beyond mentioning their existence, Père Tattevin does not give any description of these dances in South Raga, and, apart from my own, the only descriptions I know are those given by Deacon from Seniang [2] and by Harrisson from Matanavat [3] on the north coast of Malekula and from the Big Nambas.[4] All these emphasise the sex element. It is said, both in Seniang and in Matanavat, that the beauty of the dances is so great and the grace of the dancers so alluring that women are tempted to leave their husbands for love of the youths who take part. This same element is also seen in the fact that the only such dance recorded from among the Big Nambas is one danced in honour of a chief's daughter at her marriage.

[1] See p. 721.

[2] Deacon, 4, pp. 469 ff. He mentions also (pp. 410-14) a Nalawan grade and dance called *Lelengva'al*, but the dance in this case appears to be a circular one round the gongs.

[3] Harrisson, 2, pp. 35-7. Of the dances in this district he says: "The chorus have thirty days' rigorous training. They are not allowed out of a small enclosure in which there is a special house; they are not allowed to see the sea or women; they may only eat certain oven-cooked foods." The connexion between the sea and women is interesting on account of a similar association in the dreams of modern Europeans and in legendary figures such as mermaids.

[4] Harrisson, 2, pp. 411, 413-14; also 1, pp. 113, 118-19.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

535
536
304

Connexion between na-leng and artificial elongation of the head.

One further matter of comparative interest is worth mentioning also, namely that the type of beauty chiefly associated with those dances in Seniang is intimately connected with the practice of artificially elongating the head. This type of head-deformation, or head-beautifying as the natives see it, is restricted to the south and south-west of Malekula, and in Seniang only such youths as have finely elongated heads are allowed to take part.

Na-leng performances very flexible, both in form and in manner in which they are used.

535
536

I began this section on the *na-leng* by pointing out that the dances and plays called by this name represent what is perhaps the most conscious element in the whole complex of Malekulan culture. As such, they are also the most flexible, and in the case of burlesques of the secular variety new ones are constantly being invented. Indeed, it is of the essence of the secular plays that they *should* be new, or if, as often happens, a successful play is repeated, that new features should be added. The dances, being much more highly organised and involving a greater number of participants, have not yet emancipated themselves from the traditional initiation pattern to the same extent, but even they possess a much greater elasticity of form than the processional or circular dances, which change much more slowly. For the same reason, they are more movable also in a topographical sense, parties of performers vying with one another in showing off their new conceits, and so seizing every opportunity that offers to perform in other villages. Thus, while the organisation of the *na-leng* is still on a kinship basis, the ritual occasions on which they are performed are apt to be taken in a particularly light-hearted way. On the other hand, when the community is depressed they are often the first ritual element to be dropped out, the excuse of being "too lazy" to perform being one which is admitted in the case of a *na-leng*, but unthinkable in the case of the more fundamental aspects of the rite.

Dances of na-leng type from New Ireland.

535
536
171

It is therefore interesting to note that, in the only other part of the Western Pacific from which dances of *na-leng* type have been recorded, namely the Tanga group of islands off the east coast of New Ireland, these dances form part of a secret society initiation rite that has recently been introduced from the neighbouring mainland.[1] It is also perhaps not without significance that New Ireland, whence this society came, is not far from Arawi (Arue) on the coast of New Britain, which is the nearest point to Malekula where artificial elongation of the head is practised,

[1] Bell, pp. 311 ff.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
OO12 Malekula OO12

535
536
171

and whence also Speiser derives the New Hebridean practice of artificially elongating the tusks of boars.[1]

Sociologically it is interesting to note that in Tanga, while residence is patrilocal, descent and inheritance are matrilineal, which supports the conclusion already arrived at, that dances of *na-leng* type belong to a matrilineal culture ante-dating, in Malekula, the introduction of patrilocal descent and residence and the existing form of Maki.

Canoe na-leng from Matanavat resembles similar dance recorded by Captain Cook from Tonga in 1776.

In concluding this section, I cannot refrain from comparing a brief account of a *na-leng* recently danced in Matanavat with one seen by Captain Cook in Tonga in the year 1776. Of Matanavat Harrisson writes:

"A beautiful dance symbolises the coming of a first canoe, the chorus moving forward with feathered and painted paddles to the nut-rattled rhythm from the bangles tied on their ankles, all the upper body moving in muscle as their feet strike forward like waves over the earth, while at the back the two steersmen work their big paddles as if in a storm." [2]

Captain Cook's account from Tonga runs:

"The chief entertained us, in his turn, with an exhibition, which, as was acknowledged by us all, was performed with a dexterity and exactness far surpassing the specimen we had given of our military manœuvres. It was a kind of dance, so entirely different from anything I had ever seen, that I fear I can give no description that will convey any tolerable idea of it to my readers. It was performed by men; and one hundred and five persons bore their parts in it. Each of them had in his hand an instrument neatly made, shaped somewhat like a paddle, of two feet and a half in length, with a small handle and a thin blade, so that they were very light. With these instruments they made many and various flourishes, each of which was accompanied with a different movement. At first the performers ranged themselves in three lines, and, by various evolutions, each man changed his station in such a manner that those who had been in the rear came into the front. Nor did they remain long in the same position. At one time they extended themselves in one line, they then formed into a semicircle, and lastly into two square columns. While this last movement was executing, one of them advanced and performed an antic dance before me, with which the whole ended.

"The musical instruments consisted of two drums, or rather two

[1] See p. 267.

[2] Harrisson, 2, p. 35. In this *na-leng* the dancers have apparently combined the mythological motive of crossing the water, seen in the Atchin dance, with a historical drama.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

535
536
171

hollow logs of wood, from which some varied notes were produced by beating on them with two sticks. It did not, however, appear to me that the dancers were much assisted by these sounds, but by a chorus of vocal music, in which all the performers joined at the same time. Their song was not destitute of pleasing melody, and all their corresponding motions were executed with so much skill, that the numerous body of dancers seemed to act as if they were one great machine. It was the opinion of every one of us that such a performance would have met with universal applause on an European theatre, and it so far exceeded any attempt we had made to entertain them, that they seemed to pique themselves on the superiority they had over us." [1]

Tongan and Malekulan settings compared.

This account is interesting for its close similarity with the Malekulan performances. The hundred and five performers undoubtedly represent a chorus of one hundred, which, it will be remembered, is the ideal number in the Small Islands, with five other dancers taking individual rôles. The chorus forms into squares, and the same instrument accompanies the dance as that used in the Small Islands *na-leng*, namely the small horizontal slit gong. The manner in which the Tongan dance was performed, as a theatrical performance pure and simple, also agrees with the flexible nature of the *na-leng* on Malekula.

Polynesian elements in the New Hebrides probably due to passage of Polynesians on their migration eastward.

The comparison just drawn raises anew the question of the nature of Polynesian influence in the New Hebrides. It is sometimes thought that such traces as are found are due to chance voyages back westward from Polynesia in comparatively recent times. Such movements have undoubtedly taken place, though whether by design or owing to contrary winds is not known. Both may have contributed. But the fundamental connexion of the *na-leng*, not with the newer, but with the older forms of public graded society ritual in Malekula, point rather to the fact that some elements of Polynesian culture at least reached Polynesia by way of the New Hebrides.

If this is the case, it reinforces the impression gained from the evidence of the extensive stone constructions in such places as Gaua [2] and Malo that there existed in these islands at one time a culture considerably more highly developed than any of those found there now, and that this had much in common with certain aspects of Polynesian culture as it existed when the white men first found it.

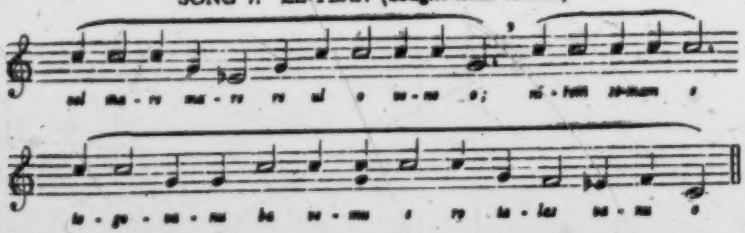
[1] Cook, pp. 263-6.

[2] See Codrington, 3, Frontispiece, and Harrisson, 2, Plate facing p. 322, which figures the only stone statue carved in the round that has been recorded in the islands.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

881 533 Now also, in addition to songs of the *Na-rel* song-and-dance cycle, yet others are sung belonging to the cycle called *Le-tean*, of which the following, sung very slowly, is a good example:

SONG 7. LE-TEAN (bought from Atchin)



This is an Atchin song, bought from that island, and the words are neither in the Atchin nor in the Vao language, but are a mixture of the poetic diction ordinarily used in songs, and Atchin words mispronounced in the usual Vao manner. They appear to mean "Dance upward, upward, let us go to a high place; Our yams at Togh-vanu, the first place, we distribute to all places." The words of the corresponding Atchin song belonging to the *Kulen* cycle on that island, sung on a similar occasion, run: "*Leng mare maro re ulol weno o; ni-rom semam o Me-le Mparav ba womu o re le les womu o.*" Allowing for changes in pronunciation, the words are the same except for the fact that the Atchin word *leng*, recalling the *na-leng* maze-dances, has been replaced by the Vao word *sel*, the ordinary word for "dance," and the name of the Vao village of Togh-vanu (note the poetic *To-go-wa-nu* to fit in with the rhythm) replaces that of the Atchin village of Emil Parav (note again the poetic *Me-le Mparav*). The name of the village alters, of course, with each village in which the song is sung, and it is an interesting example of the boasting ethos of Malekula that in each case the village in which the song is sung is designated "the first place"! The tune has also lost distinction in transit, being distinctly less impressive than the Atchin version.[1]

The songs belonging to this cycle differ in character from those of most Small Island song-cycles in that they are sung very slowly and with much conscious dignity, within the house-enclosure (later inside the house itself), and to a slow measured walking tread. This one is also remarkable in that it is one of the few Small Island songs which fit into common (4) time.

881 535 *Villages in succession dance Banana-Leaves. Operation announced to take place on seventh day after the last dance.*

When the construction of the initiation house is finished, members of all the Vao villages arrive in turn, at intervals of a few days, to perform the *Banana-Leaves* dance.

[1] See future volume.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

The dance, which begins at sundown, usually lasts well into the night, and is illuminated with the light of torches (*rehere*) borne by the novices, who dance with them in two ranks, one before and one behind the main body of dancers, the tutors dancing empty-handed with the guests.

Each village comes to dance in its prescribed turn. When the rite is being held in Togh-vanu (the village which my informant had in mind when giving this account), the last village to dance is Singon, and it is on this occasion that the leading member of Singon, or, alternatively, of Lavame, exercises his privilege of announcing the date of the operation, these villages having been the first to purchase the new form of the rite from Atchin.

There is, however, no choice of date, which must, by tradition, be fixed for the seventh day after the last dance by the last visiting village.

The intervening seven days are spent busily by the novices collecting yams, bananas and other vegetables with which to make puddings for their tutors, and in bargaining for fowls and snaring flying foxes to cook in them.

The puddings thus made are large ones, taking the whole night to cook. They are placed in the ovens on the Eve of the day fixed for the operation.

8. DAY OF THE OPERATION

In the morning the puddings prepared by the novices are taken out of the ovens and given to the tutors to eat, in return for which the tutors present the novices with money-mats (*mangau*) or pigs.

Novices pay their mothers' brothers with pigs provided by the novices' fathers. Tutors and novices race down to the beach.

The pigs to be paid by the novices to their mothers' brothers are then tied to stakes planted in the dancing-ground by the novices' fathers, who also supply the pigs. When these are ready, the gong-signal called *na-mbe Al-dralen* is sounded, to the accompaniment of which the novices and their tutors dance in a serpentine course round and in and out among the pigs.

With the now imminent approach of the operation, the excitement is intense. At the arrival at last of the great moment, pride and the joy of the dance mingle to create an atmosphere of exaltation which does much to allay the apprehension of physical pain. All are now filled with one idea, the speedy consummation of the rite. As the dance comes to an end, in great haste and apparent confusion each novice unties his pig and presents it to his mother's brother in payment for the rite. Then each tutor takes his novice by the hand, and together they all race down to the beach at Kowu, where the operation is to be performed.

3: Harrisson N-5 (1934-1935) 1936
0012 Malekula 0012
Atchin

bunia introduced to destroy mosquito larvae; the movements of hill people to the sea controlled; no women should be allowed to work on a plantation. If these steps are taken the physical conservation of the bushman may be achieved.

The cultural conservation technique cannot be expressed so concretely. It is too late to preserve the pattern complete. There is however a good alternative, and I can best give my point of view by describing a concrete example of what can happen with proper guidance or good luck, as on the island of Atchin.

(ii) *Atchin*, 1935.—There is no doubt that on small islands a mile or less across health is much better and *Anopheles* mosquitoes are often absent. They are the small island populations which are increasing most rapidly throughout the group, though some are still decreasing, and in these islands I see the best future of the race. Most have mainly mission populations, but on some heathens are dominant. One such is Atchin, half a mile off the east coast of Malekula; of the four hundred and eighty natives less than two dozen are Christians. A Seventh Day Adventist missionary lived there for many years, and all the other missions maintain native teachers there. The missions have had no success, but the natives got some ideas from them which they have incorporated into their own culture. More valuable has proved the visit of an anthropologist, John W. Layard. He was there more than twenty years ago, but to this day is remembered as Tsoni (Johnny). He gained a remarkable understanding of the Atchinese, and his sympathy greatly encouraged the people to keep up their old heathen customs. Like all Hebrideans, the Atchinese sold land to the whites for a few guns in the early days. Unlike all the rest, they have since bought it back. Their country is their own. As their yam gardens are on the mainland, they are expert canoeists; they still keep up the old canoe voyages to Ambrym, trading penis-wrappers for pigs; to Malo, Santo, and east Malekula. The old turmeric-dye leaf trade has been taken over by French ships, and for some years now there has been no ritual sex-initiation voyage to Omba, home of the benign deity Ta-har (= Tagaro). The best fishermen, whole villages club their copra together to get a modern European drag net; but do not let decay the ancient stone-wall trap, a sort of lobster-pot, and the special handnets for the Palolo worm, which at certain seasons appears in millions, giving its name to three of the lunar months. They run their own stores and sell their own copra to the highest bidder of the several ships that call in search of this lucrative trade. They encourage whites to visit but not to stop. They make sham spears to sell to world-touring yachts which call regularly to see these remarkably safe savages; the real spears they do not show. They have twice done all their dances for film companies, in no way to the detriment of the dance culture or significance, rather the opposite. Baker (1935, p. 212) says of the Sakaus, Santo: "If they had been persuaded to dance for the tourists it would have been the beginning of the break-up of their culture, in which dancing plays an important part. . . . The prostitution of their culture by tourists would be deleterious not only to themselves but also to social anthropology." Apart from the fact that the Sakaus have unfortunately lost, almost forgotten, the whole dance-cycle of the highest chiefly grade (*vuster*), and that the special dance for the marriage of a

3: Harrisson N-5 (1934-1935) 1936
0012 Malekula 0012
ATChin

chief's daughter has been given up for years, Atchin contradicts his theory in fact. Baker I think underestimates the vanity of the native.

The Atchinese are among the very few peoples friendly to the administration, and they now appeal at once for peaceful settlements to all disputes. In the old days they gave a lot of trouble, but living on a small island they found a warship was more significant to them than to the bushmen. War is no more, abortion uncommon; the older men consciously want the place to grow; and grow it does. Thus it was the Atchinese who drew my attention to the exorbitantly high pig payments demanded as bride price all over the area in recent years; with their support I was able to lower the price by 80 per cent., back to pre-white level, thus enabling young men to marry with only normal difficulty. Similarly these folk like European medicines for introduced diseases, but use their own for the endemic ones. Their pig transactions and graded-society (*Maki*) rites have been modified; some things have been taken away, others added, both from white and black sources. Atchin dances are second only to those of Matanavat; they are kept up with exactitude and enthusiasm; also with new and often spontaneous variations in one type of the *na-leng*, the highest manifestation of Hebridean art and living. Sorcery and poison are no longer tolerated; the Atchinese are bitter against the adjacent island Vao for continuing these practices—bitter, but not disbelieving. Magic is not now important; old legends and stories, in which these people excel, are a part of daily life and juvenile instruction; the same myths collected by Layard and myself in 1914 and 1935 respectively agree perfectly, there has been no deterioration. The old burial rites and beliefs survive unimpaired.

In general the old customs that are savage or anti-social under modern conditions have disappeared, while those with business, religious, health, or play value have survived, even expanded. It is in this Europeanized heathenism, this intelligently primitive and adaptive but obstinate outlook, that the ancient Melanesian culture is most likely and able to survive. On Atchin to-day every village has its great drums, in lovely dancing glades, dolmens, carved human and bird effigies; a little distance away behind a native-style stone wall is a cluster of palm houses kept clean; at one corner perhaps a cement and iron house, the men's lodge, pride of the place. The women have more status, charm, freedom, and gaiety than elsewhere in the area.

I found the Atchinese charming people—and charm is a word I seldom think of applying to a Melanesian. They are thoroughly independent and sophisticated, combining Melanesian business ability with a more Polynesian intelligence and grace to direct it. The planters and missionaries have no good word to say for Atchin, which is an indication. Few tribes have had the good luck and intelligence to use the white man's things for their own advantage, in harmony with their own culture. I believe that what the Hebridean needs most to-day is guidance in this direction associated with simple medical aid. New education, religion and outlet are unnecessary and inadvisable now, and perhaps for some time to come. A few sympathetic men and women, without undue prejudice, could with a little money and many medicines work wonders. Atchin might well serve as a model in cultural adaptation. It